

PUGET SOUND MONITORING CONSORTIUM

December 15, 2008

Mr. Jay Manning
Director, Washington State Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Mr. Manning,

On behalf of the members of the Puget Sound Monitoring Consortium, we are pleased to present to you their final report and recommendations to the Washington State Legislature and the Puget Sound Partnership. We request that you officially transmit this letter and the report to the appropriate Legislative committees, the Puget Sound Partnership, Washington Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health, and other interested parties.

The 2007 Legislature directed the Department of Ecology to “facilitate the development of an ongoing monitoring consortium similar to Chesapeake Bay or San Francisco Bay to institute coordination between local, state and regional monitoring agencies.” In September 2007 you invited a diverse group of stakeholders to achieve the Legislature’s mandate. Such was the interest in and enthusiasm for developing a coordinated regional monitoring program that over eighty people participated in the Consortium’s process over the past fifteen months.

The Consortium’s primary task was to recommend a governance structure in which public, private, and non-profit entities will join together to implement a regional monitoring and assessment program. The Consortium’s Governance Committee and subcommittees met sixteen times for more than forty-four hours to discuss, develop, and refine the recommendations in this report. Two other committees of the Consortium continue to contribute many hours and great creativity to clarify and unify efforts to understand and improve the health of the Puget Sound ecosystem.

The report we present today offers the Legislature and Puget Sound Partnership two credible, practical, and viable options for structuring an integrated, coordinated monitoring and assessment program for the Puget Sound ecosystem. Because the program is urgently needed, and will be built over time, the Consortium is recommending that the Partnership select a governance structure before the end of this biennium on June 30, 2009 and implement a transition to the new regional program during the next fiscal year.

Consortium members recognize the dire condition of the State’s budget. They are not requesting additional funds to continue the Consortium’s impressive start. But they are asking that the State of Washington contribute the same level of funding for the next biennium as it provided in the current one, \$800,000. The Consortium believes that it is most appropriate for these funds to be allocated to the Puget Sound Partnership.

Thank you for your leadership in convening the Consortium, and for providing the resources needed to launch its work. The members would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the findings and recommendations contained in this report.

Sincerely,

Karen Dinicola
Project Manager

James F. Reid
Facilitator

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